

FEATURE PRESENTATION VIRTUAL COMBAT NEWSLINE VIRTUA FIGHTER KIDS, MEGATUDO 2098, RANMA 1/2, NIGHTS CONIX SUPER STREET FIGHTER II, CAMMY, SAMURAI SHODOWN

# GAME ON! USA

THE MAGAZINE OF ELECTRONIC MANGA GAMING

NEWS AND  
STAR GLADIATOR  
NIGHTS  
RANMA 1/2 BATTLE RENAISSANCE

CONIX  
SUPER STREET FIGHTER II: CAMMY  
SAMURAI SHODOWN

FEATURE PRESENTATION

## VIRTUAL COMBAT

SONY AND SEGA'S POLYGON BATTLE  
VIRTUA FIGHTER 3-TEKKEN 2  
PSX-TOSHINDEN 2

## MAKING CONVERTS

CONVERSIONS: HOW THEY'RE DONE,  
'WHAT'S LEFT OUT

VOLUME NO. 2  
\$5 US/\$6/\$4.50 CAN.



PLUS

THE LATEST GAMING ANIME, MANGA, AND NEWS DIRECTLY FROM JAPAN!

Shogun 1998

# DEATH.

It's what they live for.

## BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN 2



Against a dark and shifting 3-D landscape, the warriors of the twisted underworld known as BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN 2™ await your return. How do they know you'll be back? Let's just say it's a gut feeling. As in the first 360° go-round, the moves are lethal, the stages visceral and the characters, wicked. And this time, the original avengers are joined by a new crew of fighters. Like Tracy, the sexy cop gone bad; Verm, merciless madman; and Chaos, a friendly fella who happens to swing a sickle.

All of 'em real keen to get to know you better. On every level.

So welcome back. And plan to stay awhile. Because here in Battle Arena Toshinden 2, these forsaken foes aren't just out to take you down. They're down to take you out.

<http://www.playmatestoys.com>



**TAKARA**®

Battle Arena Toshinden 2 and its characters are trademarks of Takara Co., Ltd. ©Takara Co., Ltd. 1996. Programmed ©Iremsoft 1996. All rights reserved. PlayStation, the PlayStation logo, and the PS logo are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment.



NEVER Stop Play  
La Borda, CA 91548  
(916) 942-0942



# Future Game Designers, Unite!



At video games sit, and in gaming create? Editing the future for this month's *Game On! USA*, I was tempted to compare polygon lighting pixels' efforts at realism to the geometric sketches of Renaissance painters. (Overstated? All right, I surrender...) But I had doubts. Today comics and animation are finally being recognized as art forms, but video games are still pariahs, like quarter-guilty parties at a gallery opening.

So why, officially, aren't they "art"? There are exceptions—the few "arcade museums" come to mind—but these are also obstacles. Many games aren't independent from their hardware; recommending a Saturn game above a PlayStation one, or vice versa, can get you blamed for taking sides. Like movies, too, video games are a communal team effort: for every Shigeru Miyamoto or Yu Suzuki there are hundreds of programmers, designers, and playtesters, and who should get credit? Finally but crucially, for some people video games break the "rule" that art should be seen, not involved in. Critics don't expect to find *To Kill a Mockingbird* in the format of a *Choose Your Own Adventure* book. But all good stories involve the audience. I've seen movies with less excitement than *Blade*, *Command & Conquer*, and beat heads with less thought than *Artemis*.

I'm not arguing that the 1800s' *The Three Musketeers* or the 1990s' *Soul Edge* (yep) but even if the Academy doesn't know it, video games are already art to the people who will use day designs them. When I was 12 my brother and I were designing video games—fighting side-scrollers based on our puzzle hints, not-to-be-seeds like *1945* and *Millie Fights*. 25-level contraptions on ROM cartridges of 1986 could have held. My brother practiced drawing by observing, not Michelangelo's models, but the sprouts in *Morbid* and *Space Harrier*. We weren't exceptional couch potatoes, either; many people we knew played games, fought bloodies then

*Mortal Kombat* and quarts longer than *Final Fantasy III*. For real players, there's no question that games are art (and fun).

The big shoes never lived us, and we put our creativity to other uses. My constant need for revised houses (much to the Michael Jackson boss in our horror game) probably wouldn't have survived the lawyers anyway. But now, ten years later, the standard video-game-as-carpet-bag slap ("Move aside! It's another *Street Fighter*!") is being challenged by the increasing recognition of individual craftsmanship, and by the spread of new media like the anarchic Internet. In Japan games are more recognized, and there is easy movement between manga and gaming. Creators are also less restricted in the PC market, where an idea like *Doom* can grow. We can only hope that the freewheeling spirit of individual designers, who grew up playing games, will find a place in the 32-bit market, in the same way that independent comics are ever-increasing in popularity.

Looking back at the sheets of graph paper we covered with bosses and level maps, I doubt that the next paper hit will come out of a fan's sketches and not a boardroom meeting. Video games may not have been art to our *Play*-playing parents, but they will be to the next generation, and *Game On! USA* will be happily be guests at the gallery.

Jon Thompson  
Editor

Send your letters and fan art to *Game On! USA*! Address mail to: *Game On! USA, c/o Via Communications, P.O. Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107*. Address e-mail to [game\\_on@victoria.com](mailto:game_on@victoria.com).

Game On! USA  
The Magazine of Electronic Manga Gaming  
Volume 1, Issues 1-2

Publisher  
Seyi Hunkin  
Editor-in-Chief  
Seyi Hunkin  
Senior Editor  
Josh Latham  
Art Director  
Volodya Hunkin

Editor  
Jon Thompson

Associate Editor  
Volodya Hunkin

Editorial Assistant  
Kai Doi

Layout and Design  
Ted Stern

Contributing Writers  
Kai Doi  
Ryan MacDonald  
David Mills  
Jeffrey Noren  
Paddy Van  
Maurice Tubb  
Bryan Webb  
Jon Thompson

Special Thanks to  
Seyi Hunkin  
Ryan MacDonald  
Tobias Hunkin

Game On! Japan  
Editorial Content  
Kenshin Nakamura

Game On! USA  
Editorial Content  
Kenshin Nakamura

*JOHN STREET FIGHTER'S GAMMY*  
Story and Art by Michael Nakamura  
Translated by James D. Hunkin and John Glen  
Lettering and Touch Up by Mary Kellie

*JAMIGAM SHOGUNRY*  
Story by Michael Nakamura  
Art by Yuki Miyoshi  
Translated by Peter Bader and Kevin Hunkin  
Lettering and Touch Up by Mary Kellie

FOR ADVERTISING RATES AND  
SUBSCRIPTIONS CONTACT:  
Directors of Sales & Marketing, Eds Ryan  
(415) 346-7013 Fax: 31

*Game On! USA* (ISSN 1087-0581) is published monthly by Via Communications, P.O. Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107. Quarterly: \$9.99 (US only). One-year (four issues) subscription to *Game On! USA* is available in the U.S. for \$49.99 (US only) July 2001. Regular subscription rates in the U.S.: \$9.99 for one year, \$39.99 for one year in Canada & Mexico, \$49.99 for one year in the U.S. for one year. All other countries: \$19.99 for one year, \$79.99 for one year. ALL ORDERS USE ONLY: STREET FIGHTER'S GAMMY © CAPCOM 1991, 1995, 1996. JAMIGAM SHOGUNRY © SAGE 1995. BLADEMASTER: MASTERS. Send address changes to *Game On! USA*, P.O. Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107. The Editors welcome company product information for all video games, manga and video game-related merchandise. Such materials should be submitted to: *Game On! USA*, P.O. Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107. ©1996 Via Communications Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. *Game On! USA* is a trademark of Via Communications. **FALSE GAME TIT OF THE MONTH!** For unlimited play in *Lost Home*, take just under the limits down of the world with a pair of mauls. As personal appearance come in, down them and take their names.



Anime & Manga Monthly

# ANIMERICA



PLUS the serialized manga  
**X/1999**  
by Clamp!

## If it's Anime in America, It's got to be ANIMERICA!

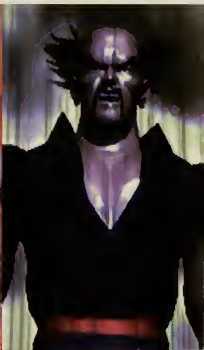
ANIMERICA, ANIME & MANGA MONTHLY puts the best of America's anime land in your hands, every month! Understand more about your favorite shows and discover brand-new favorites with our in-depth articles and exclusive celebrity interviews with the anime industry's brightest stars! Get a feel for what your next picks will be on your must-rent and must-buy lists with our anime review section with its innovative Animelcon™ System, which helps you find your way to exactly the kind of anime you want to see! Plus video game news, anime music reviews, contests, giveaways, industry buzz and much, much more!

US\$4.95 each, or subscribe, and get 12 issues for US\$58.00—we pay shipping and handling (in the continental U.S.)! Overseas subscriptions available!

Call TOLL FREE (800) 394-3042 and order now!

# Virtual Combat

Sega and Namco are neck-and-tech in the race to make the next thing in polygon fighters





## Virtua Fighter 3

Of the two new characters in VF3, only *Aoi Unovision* was revealed in the 1996 All-UD show, though the second is also supposed to be a female fighter. Each fighter's attack is followed in VF3: Liu can flip off walls to throw opponents such as Jacky's intense level may have no ring out, and instead have the character's head by walking to the water. The up-front liquid Daniel is now truly realistic, and Jacky seemed to have grown some years younger. Seg's AM2 team visit, and we'll have more info about VF3 in a future issue.

**3D** games have sold the 32-bit systems, and fighting games have the greatest street-to-home appeal. The battle between the Sega Saturn and the Sony PlayStation is partly the battle between Sega and Namco, and in Japan is in America the fadism in anime. 3D rendering for its own sake has impressed people since the '80s, but realistic movement soon became the goal of programmers, and the acid test of realism is always the human body. Game designers know Virtual Reality is much more real when it has people. And if the people can fight one another in the process, all the better.

### THE INITIAL ATTACK: SEGA

Fighting games were big. Polygon games were big. But no one had put the two together before Sega debated *Virtua Fighter* in 1993.

Sega had been a 3D revolutionary already with *Virtua Racing*, the first game to use the Model 1 board later used in VF. By modern standards of polygon count, *Virtua Fighter* is primitive, but more than the graphics, it was the movement that won dedicated fans. At the time, average 30 fps, with true 3D, it was upholding just to watch the characters move. Sega's race with *Virtua Fighter* was all the more impressive considering they avoided many of the features of other fighting games, such as story-telling endings and a large number of characters.

But, of course, no pared-down fighting was the selling point for *Virtua Fighter* when testing new technology, stick to the gameplay basics. Players reported the realism, the lack of fireballs. Hours of research into everything from Greek wrestling to jujitsu, using actual martial artists, paid off. Accordingly, no martial *Virtua Fighter 2* Sega's AM2 development team traveled to China to watch—and, reportedly, spar with—actual masters of kung fu. With even crisper graphics and gameplay, and new characters, *Virtua Fighter 2* (and 2.01 and 2.50) solidified Sega's hit.

### THE CULT OF PERSONALITY

Serious gamers recognize the people behind games. Yu Suzuki, the sports car-driving head of Sega's AM2 team, is a celebrity in Japan, and by the end of 1995 became known in America, thanks to many interviews. Japanese gaming magazines have "AM2 Watch" sections just to keep an eye on Suzuki and his staff. But the characters in *Virtua Fighter* are even more popular. The Internet hosts dozens of web sites and FAQs for specific characters. Beyond that, the merchandise begins. Sarah Bryant pen-ups, Susan CD-ROMs of characters art, best-selling music CDs, coffee table books, character-specific strategy videos.

**A look at the top ten Japanese arcade games for one month shows five Sega and five Namco titles. If you don't think that's rivalry...**

Sega also made the wise choice of making the *Virtua Fighter* series near to player input, in the form of fan events, the winner of the First World Fighting Tournament in the game (Liu) was determined by the real-life winner of a nationwide competition held at Game Spot 21 in Tokyo, Japan. American and Canadian fans have their own tournaments, whether formal ones or just open up to Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal to meet and beat fellow players. Playing styles have been seriously analyzed. Japanese strategy-style ("iron man" or "champion") players actively challenge their opponents, while American players tend to use the ready style (from the verb "to wait"), waiting for the opponent to strike first and then making them wish to come when they're open.

### THE SECOND ROUND: NAMCO

In their own press, the arcade company Namco admits they were "previously best-known for Pac-Man," but that changed with Tekken. Like Sega, Namco became known for 3D racing simulations before it pulled out its ace. Unlike *Virtua Fighter*, however, Tekken wasn't an overnight success.

Tekken's original title "Rave War" appeared in the arcades in 1994, where it was immediately compared to the almost simultaneously-released *Virtua Fighter 2*. It had a darker plot than the *Virtua Fighter* games, and its characters were also weirder. Some gamers found them too ugly, or lacking in a strong central hero (Kazuya, the protagonist, is undeniably evil). Tekken's "a button for each limb" control system was also unlike anything seen before, and attracted "love it or hate it" responses. Still, its controls and its total of 18 characters were unprecedented.

The PlayStation lifted Tekken to a best-seller, paving the way to make the 1995 Tekken 2 an arcade hit. Signing up with Sony for home system exclusivity, and showing technology to build the System 11 hardware, Namco began to build on its Tekken series. Adding languages, regions, and the devil to the character lineup was a break with those who wanted Namco to follow in Sega's realism-oriented footsteps. Touches like Jack's winning move, where he pounds on his chest until he loses balance and falls over, show an overall sense of humor. The arcade Tekken 2 also emphasized the number of characters (now 24) with a character time-release system, releasing one new character per week after the game's first appearance and luring arcade gamers back (although skimming the machines off at night kept meaning the clock to Day One, a bag which Namco matched to fit). Tekken 2 was B added a new character—the angel—and kept fans in anticipation. Now there's "Namco Watch" sections in Japanese gaming magazines, and 108-player New Year's Eve Tekken matches to determine champions.

*continued on page 6*

Virtua Fighter



Virtua Fighter 2



Virtua Fighter 3



Virtua Fighter 3





Tekken



Tekken 2

continued from page 3

the winner of the First World Fighting Tournament in Virtua Fighter (Lau) was determined by the real-life winner of a nationwide competition held at Game Spot 21 in Tokyo, Japan

#### HOMES AWAY FROM HOME

Although Sega's arcade-to-home transfers were normally easier than Namco's, the Sega Saturn wasn't conceived as a 3D polygon system...until *Virtua Fighter* forced it to be. In five programming months, the AM2 team rushed *Virtua Fighter* onto the unfamiliar Saturn hardware, where it became the American pack-in game. There wasn't enough time to clean up graphical glitches, though, leading to the creation of the texture-mapped *Virtua Striker*. Finally, *Virtua Fighter 2* appeared in time for Christmas '95.

The PlayStation was designed for 3D, and though *Tekken* didn't make the launch software, November release was more than enough to make the '95 holiday season. Aggressive advertising and beating V2 to the shelves was key for sales which made it a hit title. *Tekken 2* is now in the U.S. in September, and Namco's *Soul Edge* will likely be an easy System 11 conversion too.

#### GRASS BLADES AND SWORD BLADES: THE NEXT LEVEL

A look at the top ten Japanese arcade games for one month shows five Sega and five Namco titles. If you don't think that's crazy, you just keep waiting for Sega to make products for the Nintendo 64. Namco and Sega's control of the arcade market ensures they'll be side-by-side for some time to come (dispute games like *Tekken* crossing between PlayStation, Saturn, PC and arcade). *Virtua Fighter* has a huge Japanese lead, but Namco has the strength of the American PlayStation market.

With its new characters and graphics, *Virtua Fighter 3* is Sega's 1996 plan to become #1 in the arcade. "You can see grass blades under the character's feet" is one standard response from viewers of V3 demonstrations. *Virtua Fighter 3* will be out in late 1996...trilled by *Tekken 3*, which Namco has kept even more secret than *Virtua Fighter 3*, if such a thing is possible.

The bloody end to this conflict is when the home hardware becomes incapable of keeping up with the arcade...or, in Namco's case, when System 11's PlayStation origins become a drag on its arcade capabilities. But Stay will keep fighting for Namco, who,

like Sega, has produced other successful fighting games besides their main franchise (such as Namco's *Soul Edge*—polygons with weapons—and Sega's *Fighting Vipers*—polygons with armor). System 11 and Model 2 are too new to have exhausted their possibilities.

Soon gamers will know if the gameplay in *Virtua Fighter 3* matches the graphics—graphics which remind you that the ultimate goal of polygon games is not to look like polygons. Also, until joysticks and the human mind become capable of more precise 3D movement, some aspects of 3D games may stay the same as 2D ones. AM2's Yu Suzuki believes that a basically 2D (head-to-head, linear) fighting field is the best even in 3D games, so keep gamers' concentration. It remains to be seen if other games follow *Tekken*'s step into broader 3D arenas.

There'll be more dollars and development hours shed before the fighting is over. **B**



SNK

Who has done more 3D games than SNK? *Shin On Fire* uses rendered graphics in a flat 3D field, and the shooter *Metal Slug* uses rendered backgrounds. But are they truly 3D?



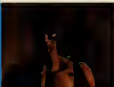
Capcom

Even Capcom has given up. *King of Fighters '95* and *Street Fighter Alpha 2* are 3D games, that's only as much you can do."



#### Tekken 2

*Tekken 2* seems that wasn't available when the issue went to press, but *Tekken 2* itself has undergone a lot of changes from the arcade to the PlayStation's *Tekken 2* version. Each character, even the bosses, now has an individual ending, and a win/loss mode where you see through your character's eyes add a new experience, more like a conventional boxing game. Even the little explosions when you strike another character are now light-sourced to cast shadows





# OUT OF THE ARCADES

*Is the pen mightier  
than the polygon?*

Anime and manga versions of polygon fighting games always bring up the question: is it appropriate to portray polygon characters with traditional art? (It's certainly cheaper.) Judging from the amount of manga it certainly is.



## TEKKEN

**Coming Soon to a Video Store Near You?**  
The original Tekken manga series having come to an end, as well as a Tekken anthology comic published by Game Comic Gallery, Tekken 2 manga by Norihiro Takeda is a current ongoing series in Gamers! The mostly-serious storyline focuses on Michelle Cheng and Jun, some battle sequences have brief explanatory diagrams on how the various moves work in the game. Rumors persist that Tekken anime is in progress, but Anime Japan has said there's no truth to it. How it would fit all 18 (or 24) characters into one storyline would be impressive in itself.

## TOSHINDEN

### Manga from the Start

Toshinden had a tie to anime and manga right from the beginning, with lush, colorful character designs by Tsukasa Kurobuki (Assistant Costume Designer for the Fatal Fury anime). Kurobuki also drew a 26-page introduction to the game in the gaming meg *Devigiki* PlayStation, showing the various characters gathering at the tournament as Gals watches and sneers. ("Next Month the Screen Explodes with Hot Fighting Action!") A monthly series by Tokushi Tokibayashi also runs in *Shonen Ace*, and Asahi Comic and Kibunsha's Game Comic Gallery have already released Toshinden 2 manga anthologies by various authors with all the war angels, rivalry and swordplay of the game. The art quality varies wildly, as is typical for anthologies, so no "definitive" story yet depicts the entire series. Toshinden's setting is also hard to pinpoint; gun-toting modern thugs alternate with seemingly *Shogun*-era settings. Possibly the two-volume Toshinden animation will clarify everything.



## VIRTUA FIGHTER

### Virtually everywhere

You can't find much more of any video game than *Virtua Fighter*. In Japan there's a *Virtua Fighter* anime TV series, set before the first tournament (i.e., with younger characters) and starring Alex, Pal, Jacky and Sarah. The half-hour episodes are directed by Hideki Takabitsu (Wam, Tekkaman Blade 2) and have character designs by Ryo Tanaka (Flat of the North Star). The show includes "educational" sections when they break off to explain the moves, how to use your opponent's weight against him, and how to beat up people in general. So popular is it that its run has recently been extended.

*Virtua Fighter 2* manga, including several Sarah Bryant-specific stories, appears armed in comics aimed at 3rd-6th graders in *Weekly Playboy* and Comic Tezuka. Jacky Bryant is actually the main character in *Legend of Sarah* by Takahashi Matsumoto, a story which shows the brother and sister before and after Sarah's brainwashing (as well as the criminals responsible, never seen in the game). Contrarily, Americans have only had a single one-shot 1995 *Virtua Fighter* comic by Marvel, which approached the subject matter tongue-and-cheekly enough to name the setting "Virtua City." (They did, however, depict Sarah Bryant in suitable gaudy attractiveness.)



## NEW TO THE ARENA:

How *Battle Arena Toshinden 2* Came to the U.S.

Next to Sega and Namco's flagships, the most well-known 3D fighting game is probably *Battle Arena Toshinden*. *Toshinden*'s gameplay, with flashy special moves and fast (some say too fast) motion, was just what some people wanted after the relative economy of *Tekken* and *Virtua Fighter*. Some described it as "Virtua Fighter with *Street Fighter* moves."

How did *Toshinden* come out of a development team with no past hits to reach such success? For an answer, *Game On! USA* visited with Dave Hoffmann, producer of *Battle Arena Toshinden 2* for Playmates Interactive.

**Game On! USA:** *Toshinden* was published in Japan by Takara, and in the States by Sony Computer Entertainment. Did you have any trouble getting the rights?

**Hoffmann:** *Toshinden* was shared first in originally, but Sony had a prior arrangement with Takara.

**Game On! USA:** How'd that change for *Toshinden 2*?

**Hoffmann:** We have a really long and close relationship with Takara, primarily due to our toy business. For instance, they did the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles in Japan, we did them here. When Takara closed their American office, we basically offered to distribute their products, and they said, "Yes."

**Game On! USA:** Does Playmates have any other fighting games "under their belt," so to speak, or is this a new direction for the company?

**Hoffmann:** I personally have experience with fighting games. I used to be employed with Data East, at which time we were working on *Blitzkrieg*, the game which started the big Capcom vs. Data East lawsuit. Data East eventually won it, but it was a long, money-draining lawsuit. If they had lost, Capcom would have been able to go to every company that produced a one-on-one fighting game and make them pay royalties. That showed the

industry that Capcom's not the only one who can make fighting games... thank God!

**Game On! USA:** Do you personally play many fighters?

**Hoffmann:** I really like *Street Fighter Alpha* on the Sony Playstations, and *Tekken 2* is a really good one in the arcade.

**Game On! USA:** So... 2D or 3D?

**Hoffmann:** I would try 3D nowadays. I still play 2D, but I'm amazed at some of the graphics that *Toshinden* was able to pull off with *Toshinden 2*.

**Game On! USA:** Have you spoken closely with Takara, in Japan, about the crossover? Did they do the programming, or did you do it in-house?

**Hoffmann:** The development company is called Tose, and they are based in Aoshima, Tokyo. I had to go there a couple of times to work closely with the programmers and see demos and oversee the conversion.

**Game On! USA:** And how much did you alter? Was it mostly just a translation process, or did you make any alterations to gameplay, graphics, etc.?

**Hoffmann:** I tried to make a lot of alterations... primarily cleaning up the text and adding the English dialogue. However, a



lot of gameplay issues I wanted to see Takara do, they just simply flat-out didn't have enough time for. For example, I would like to speed up the way the characters come out of their rolls. When they roll, it takes a second, and it leaves them vulnerable coming out of it. The gameplay's really tight as is, which we are fortunate for. But I've read some Japanese reviews which focus on some of the negative points.

**Game On! USA:** I'm curious about the *Toshinden 2* packaging. Do you try to maintain the original Japanese-style art, or will you see new American artists?

**Hoffmann:** We're absolutely trying to keep the Japanese art, and keep it as Japanese as possible. One of the things that I really admire about fighting games is that they really hold tight to their origins. When the

The Sony  
*Toshinden* packaging  
was pathetic.



characters do a special move, or they have a winning or losing animation, they're still speaking Japanese. And that is by choice. [Maken a fierce answer, no—EC] We feel it would keep the game as original as possible. As far as the packaging was concerned, the Sony Tekshinden packaging was perfect. The Tekshinden 2 packaging in Japan is pretty good. Whether it works here in the United States is still under discussion. We're probably going to touch it up and redo it, though.

**Game On! USA:** Did the characters have to be changed at all for an American audience?

**Hoffmann:** We talked about adding Earthworm Jim as a playable character, but we just didn't have time. He may be a secret character in the PC version of Tekshinden. There's also a really cool Gothic character at the end [Wonder—Ed]. The characters that were in Tekshinden have all been topped as far as polygons count.

**Game On! USA:** Japanese developers don't get much publicity over here. Tell us a little about Tatsuki.

**Hoffmann:** Hasn't off to them, they did a great job. For instance, in Duke's arena when the curtain goes up, the light actually comes down to the fighting arena. That kind of graphic quality and light sourcing and mechanical formula can be done by pretty much any Sony developer. Tatsuki just has lots of experience, plus a big office with a large amount of staff. They've done other games, but they haven't been released to the states. We're currently looking at a car racing game and an isometric puzzle game that Tatsuki has done. They've also started working with Capcom in bringing Tekshinden to the coin-op platform.

**Game On! USA:** Thank you, Mr. Hoffmann. **ES**



## Toshinden on Tape



A good benchmark of a game's popularity in Japan is whether it becomes animated. *Settle Arena* Toshinden passed, it is being made into two volumes of OAVs (Original Animation Videos) by SMD Victor.

Masami Oba, director and character designer of the *Fatal Fury* animated movie, directs. Taisaku Kobayashi, the game's original character designer, drafts and costume designs the anime characters.

The animation is a follow-up to the two volumes of audio-only CD dramas (think of radio plays), which are themselves sequels to the games, and even use the same voice talent! Some of the better-known voice actors include Akio Otsuka (the Japanese voice double of Arnold Schwarzenegger) as Rungo, Kanehito Shirogane ("D" in *Vampire Hunter D*) as Duke, Yumi Tōme (Deadlit the elf in *Record of Lodoss War*) as Seta, and Kikuko Inoue (Belldandy in *Ah! My Goddess*) as Urasa.

The plot begins at the Toshin Taibu Championship, where Chaos breaks into a fight between Eij and Gao. After Rungo is badly beaten by Chaos, Eij promises Rungo's son Christopher he will track down the sickle-wielding maniac—though he suspects his brother Sho may be behind everything. What is Sho up to? Is Seta truly free from subliminal mindwiping by the organization she escaped? Who is behind the Toshinden tournament anyway?

The first volume appears on June 21st on video and laserdisc. Volume two will be released on August 21. Typical OAV length is 45-50 minutes.



### No Sleep for the Sonic Team; Sega Plans *Nights*

Sega recently unveiled plans for a new polygon adventure game for the Saturn, *Nights*, programmed by the Sonic Team (whose earlier RPGs include *Shining Wonders*). *Nights* takes place in the "Night Dimension," where people go in their sleep, either to the green mountains and blue skies of benevolent Nightopia, or to the dark and garish hallways of Nightmare. The Nightmerrers have begun invading Nightopia, and it is up to the main characters, Eliot, Clara, and "Nights," to save it—being the only dreamers travelers to possess all the five latent, color-coded emotional qualities of which red, courage, is the rarest. The action is polygonal 3D with 360-degree flying, a special analog joystick for the Saturn is being developed for better control. *Nights* (scheduled for September release in the U.S.) looks like it could be the next action-adventure Mono or Sonic, if it shapes out well.



### Legend of *Oasis*

This Saturn title, originally called *The Japanese name* *Legend of the Elemental King* appeared in Japan in April, and is slated for American release in August. It's the sequel to *Beyond Oasis* for the Genesis. As action RPGs go, it's not as

cartoony as most, although the combat system is reminiscent of *Zelda*. You play an Ashtari-style character who fights not only with arrows and daggers but various elemental spells, including water, fire, "green" (plantlife), shadow, and "breeze" (sound and metal).

### Gungriffon

"Gungriffon" is your AWGS—Armored Walking Gun System, also known as combat mecha—in this 3D shooting game, which takes place in the 21st century when four superpowers are at war on the Eurasian continent. The Saturn game *Gungriffon*, developed by GameArts, has been out in Japan since March, and should be in the States in June from Sega of America (who initially considered changing the title to *Iron Rain*). Your mechs have enough mobility to jump to take out enemy aircraft.

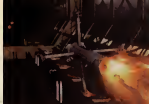
In Japan *Gungriffon* is the first game compatible with a MPEG card for the Saturn, which allows you to see 30 fps video segments. However, as the card is unavailable in the states, U.S. gamers will have to watch 15 fps video.



### Everything but the Speed Limits: Tokyo Highway Battle

It's rare that such Japan-speed titles appear in the States, but Jelco has converted Bullet-Proof Software's *PlayStation Tokyo Highway Battle*. Not only are the racing circuits based on actual Tokyo highways (which will certainly be lost on most Americans), the main racers are real-life drivers captured on video (though their names may be changed in the U.S.). Your cars (up to 12, beginning with 3) can be customized between more in the polygon playscope. Expect the American version in June if reprogramming goes as quickly as planned.





## Beltlogger 9

Geri, developers of *Klisk: The Blood* (American title *Klisk: the DNA Imperative*) will bring this 3D space-shooting game to the *PlayStation* this Summer, forsaking the dark, mechanical corridors of their earlier game for the dark, asteroid-filled depths of space. "Beltlogger 9" is a rotating pre-mining colony, 2800 meters long and 300 meters in diameter, which you must defend from dangers in outer space. The gameplay is not totally violent, but also features puzzles that must be solved.

Makoto Kobayashi, known for his work on the *Gundam* series and the designer of *Giant Robo*, is the game's character and mech designer.

## JVC Considers New Keio Game

The bunny-eared manga mascot from the old Sega CD shooter *Keio Flying Squadron* is back in a Saturn platform game, *Keio Flying Squadron: The Fighting Chapter* from Victor



Entertainment. The side-scrolling action game features hammer-whacking, throwing, swimming, large boss characters and stomping on foes. Anime-style sequences are included. It was released on May 17

in Japan. JVC, who released the first game in the U.S., is considering the sequel.



## Dark Savior

Climax developed the Japanese Saturn action RPG with a rarely-seen three-quarters viewpoint. You play bounty hunter Ryu-Ya, who's just delivered a new prisoner to an island prison when the criminal escapes, starting the plot.

As you travel the grim island dis-gathering and talking alternates with fighting-game sequences. When you meet an important enemy, you must beat them in two out of three rounds of combat with power bars and on-screen announcements. In addition, *Dark Savior* uses the "capture system," a *Mega Man*-like feature where you can defeat an enemy and gain his abilities. *Dark Savior* appeared in Japan in May.



## Megastudo 2096

A *PlayStation* polygon fighter from Banpresto, scheduled for August release in Japan. The setting is the future,

when robots produced by different companies have a combat grand prix. You can choose between several different types of humanoid, inhuman, and insectoid robots,

each with firearms and melee weapons. The main character's machine is the mighty Oy Bringer, other machines include the spiky-looking Hell Bird and the spiderlike Vanilla Giger (depicted here). Playtesters at *Game On! USA* wonder how it compares to similar games such as *Zero Divide*.



## Checklist

More manga-styled titles to look for

**IN AMERICA:** Working Designs' military simulation *Iron Storm* and the side-scrolling Sega adventure *Guardian Heroes* appeared for the Saturn in April. In May, Working Designs' RPG *Shining Warden* also appeared for the Saturn. Capcom's *Darkstalkers* was delayed for *PlayStation*, to appear in stores in early June.

**IN JAPAN:** *Lupin: The Master File*, a compilation CD of information and clips about master

thief and anime hero Lupin, appeared in late March. April saw the release of the *Bakuretsu Hunter* (*Sorcerer Hunters*) game, based on the ghostbusting, tight-leather anime, and in May, the *2x2 Eyes* game (adapted from the PC and *PlayStation* versions), based on Yuto Tatekado's manga of devils and immortals, appeared. All the above are for Saturn.



Darkstalkers



Guardian Heroes

## Cels and CD-ROMs

Upcoming Japanese game releases based on anime and manga

### Harukaze Squadron V-Force

Developer Ving has recently begun production of a *PlayStation* title which will not be released until this Fall. **V-Force** is a science-fiction simulation combat game with animation sequences providing story between the tactics. As three sisters, descendants of the last survivors of an advanced civilization from the planet Venus, you are **V-Force**. Your mission is to pilot advanced fighter planes against the invading Veskael empire. Although Japanese strategy games rarely hit the U.S., **Gall Force** fans may be interested in this story of women and spaceships.



### Ranma 1/2 Battle Renaissance

When it comes to polygonization, this game proves nothing is safe! **Ranma 1/2**, one of the most popular Japanese comics and star of three 16-bit fighting games, will leap to the Japanese *PlayStation* as a polygon fighting game in Summer of '96. This release from Shogakukan Productions uses motion-capture technology for realistic movement. Specialists in the Chinese martial arts were consulted to add an authentic touch to the moves. (One question: how do you add authenticity to a series where mallets materialize out of thin air and entire fights are conducted running along the top of a chain-link fence?)



### The Great Dragon Ball Legend

How could any one system contain **Dragon Ball Z**? In May a *Saturn* version, substantially different from the older *PlayStation* fighting game, was released. The combat style is referred to as "fighting animation", instead of one-on-one battle, you can control up to three characters at once, in a large polygonal field of combat. And yes, there are animation sequences to fill all that CD space. The game follows the **Dragon Ball** story from Volume 18 of the manga to the last issue, with all the appropriate characters. One or two players, from Bandai.



polygonal field of combat. And yes, there are animation sequences to fill all that CD space. The game follows the **Dragon Ball** story from Volume 18 of the manga to the last issue, with all the appropriate characters. One or two players, from Bandai.

## Western Front

American comic and multimedia gaming



### Cyberpunk enough for ya?: Steel Harbinger

**Game Dev USA** recently got a look at an Alpha version of Mindscape's *PlayStation* game **Steel Harbinger**, scheduled for 3rd Quarter 1996. Set in the near future, after metallic alien pods have tamed all life on earth into cybernetic monsters, the game stars you as a scantly-clad half-cyborg woman who must save the human race by destroying her kin. The slaughter takes place from an angled pseudo-overhead view in which you can zoom in or out. Definitely right for fans of biomechanics and blood though the game controls are somewhat imprecise at this stage, and it's hard to see your character from some angles.)

### American Old-Timers Join Together: Williams Acquires Atari

On March 29 Williams Entertainment, publishers of arcade and home games from the **Defender** days to **Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3**, acquired Atari Games Corporation. One of the first American arcade companies, Williams now owns the very first, Atari Games, following Atari's last-gasp exit from the video game business in March. Williams' latest big arcade entry is the summer's polygon fighting game **War Gods**, incorporating **Mortal Kombat** style fatalities and digitization into the 3D genre. **War Gods** will be released for the *PlayStation* and Nintendo 64 at the end of the year.



## Arcadeline

Calling all quarters! Overseas titles that may hit home.

### Star Gladiator

The Japanese AGO '96 arcade show debuted Capcom's entry into the polygon fighting game category in move perhaps foreshadowed by their distribution of **Toshinden 2**.

**Star Gladiator** (planned for Summer release) features 8 stinging characters in combat, able to go to the side or diagonally in a 3D field. The characters include a human swordsman, a discuser, a robot with eye lasers, a clone, and a flying bird-man. The viewpoint changes for drama when you use a special attack.



### Virtue Fighter Kids

"I want the kids of the world to enjoy it," Yu Suzuki of AM2 was caught saying about this cute version of **VF2: VF Kids** (planned for Spring release in Japan, early Summer in America). It is intended to look more friendly to a first-time player than the realism of the original. Whatever else it is, it's a triumph for fans of Super Deformed (also known as Small Bodied) character designs. It's also one of Sega's first games to use the 32X arcade system. Many gamers are curious how certain moves (such as handstands) will be possible with characters whose heads are bigger than their bodies...



### Last Bronx

**Rumble in the Last Bronx**, anyone?

Despite the title, this game is set in the Tokyo outskirts. Sega's AM2 team (**Sega Rally**, **Virtual On**) has always been edified by **Virtue Fighter's** AM2, but they seem to be getting into their own with this weapon-based 3D polygon combat game. **Last Bronx's** characters (or the half-dozen visible at this time) look slightly grubbier than those in **Fighting Vipers**, and the fight to the death uses weapons such as tonfas and nunchucks.



### Sonic the Fighter

1995 seems to be Sega's blooming year for 3D fighting titles. **Sonic**, **Knuckles**, **Tails** and other animals (**Ban**, **Epio**, **Feng**...) duke it out in this unlikely entry. Sega promises to include some of the freedom of movement of the Genesis games with features like attacking while swinging on ropes. The name may change to **Kid Sonic** in the U.S. (it's scheduled for early Summer U.S. release). Like **VF2 Kids** it will initially draw players based on character appeal, but gameplay will tell a lot.

## Game On! Japan's Top Ten Games

This top ten list is based on sales, overall popularity, and industry expectations compiled by *Game On! Japan*, one of the leading cross platform game magazines in Japan. The following list appeared in its May 1996 issue.

### #1—Behemoth Lagoon

**Super Famicom/Square/RPG**  
Square may have decided to switch to PlayStation, but it's their latest **Super Famicom** (**Super Nintendo**) game that's #1 in Japan. **Behemoth Lagoon** features a variety of baroque monster designs and an internal "real-time" clock (for example, if you don't play the game in two weeks, your character doesn't feed the pets or water the plants...).

### #2—Vampire Hunter

**Sega Saturn/Capcom/Fighting**  
Fans have been waiting for this (known in the U.S. as **Darkstalkers 2: Night Warriors**) for a long time. The ring-style visuals and smoothness are one key to its popularity, another is the short loading time.

### #3—Namco Museum Volume 2

**Sony PlayStation/Namco/Action**  
The second in a series which will have five volumes. Arcade gaming fans do have long memories if the success of the classic games collection is any indicator.

### #4—Let's make Japan's Pro Soccer League!

**LI-League Pro Soccer League O' Turf**  
**Sega Saturn/SegaSports Simulation**  
A very graphically impressive 32-bit title. As each country has its own teams, sports games (such as this official licensed product of Japan's J-League) are rarely contested.

### #5—Live! Powerful Pro Baseball 3

**Super Famicom/Konami/Sports**  
At 7500 yen, the price is down for the third in this old classic series. The graphics are Super Deformed but the content and gameplay drive its success.

### #6—Super Robot Wars 4: Scramble

**Sony PlayStation/Banpresto/Simulation**

### #7—Super Famicom 5

**Super Famicom/Namco/Sports**

### #8—Super Donkey Kong 2: Doo & Diddy

**Super Famicom/Nintendo/Action-Adventure**

### #9—Tokimeki Memorial—Under the Legendary Tree

**Super Famicom/Konami/Simulation**

### #10—Gun Hazard

**Super Famicom/Square/Action-Adventure**

# Making Converts

## Following games from Japan to the U.S.

**T**hree more weeks, three more weeks...time is an important factor in the gaming industry, as anyone who's waited for delayed software (or hardware) can testify. American software companies are no slackers, but ever since the NES, the majority of console video games have been converted for U.S. use after appearing months before in Japan. Translation is not always easy or fast, though, with differences in both hardware and culture; dedicated gamers often find a choice of waiting for conversions or buying costly direct-import games. The conversion process itself, sometimes improving, sometimes censoring, exposes many of the differences between Japanese and U.S. games.

### Choosing the Games

America is a big game-buying market, but converting games is expensive, and large companies use discretion in deciding which of their games to release here. When game companies have offices in both the U.S. and Japan, the conversion process is easiest. Some companies, such as Square Soft, the makers of the *Final Fantasy* series, produce U.S. and Japanese versions practically parallel to one another.

Another source of conversions is freelance publishers who license Japanese games, usually for a flat fee, sometimes for a royalty. Some of the best-known Japanese game companies, such as Taito (*Battle Arena Toshinden*) and Enix (*Dragon Warrior*), no longer have game divisions in the U.S., and must go through third parties to find U.S. release. These companies

### Most RPGs have at least 500-600 pages of text

spend time looking for games to convert, based on potential popularity and licensing fees. When a single company produces original and conversions, the U.S. version often follows as soon as two months after the Japanese release. By the time games are more than a year old, they have little chance of being converted, but licensing fees have also dropped to a minimum, and small companies sometimes pick successful long shots as early as three years old.

### Coming Soon?

Different countries mean different gaming audiences, and often a hit on one side of the Pacific is a flop on the other. Don't expect *Marriage*, a Sakura simulation game which lets you court beautiful members of the opposite sex (language not allowed), to be advanced with a pill of "Sage" soon. To many Japanese gamers, 16-bit RPGs are still more popular than anything, something in schools literally drops where popular games are released.

"There's no question RPGs in the U.S. are a niche market," says Matt Aswood,



Public Relations manager and game translator for Working Designs (*Lunar*, *Area 88*). "A best-selling RPG in the U.S. is in the three-months-in-Japan, they're talking 'one point—what neither do you sell'."

Fighting games are some of the only games produced with an American audience in mind. *Street Fighter II* was one such exception. Very easy to convert, they are more focused on graphics or gameplay than story.

There are some practices which are common in Japan but rare in America, such as re-releasing 16-bit games for 32-bit systems with the addition of animation sequences and music touch-ups (*Virtua Fighter 2* for the Saturn and PSX). Some games such as *Ultimate* and *Super Moon* simply have larger audience bases in Japan than America. Lastly, there are many that will obviously never be converted, as they draw on obscure characters or cultural references (*Majinaka Hime*, a supernatural fantasy game with themes from Kabuki and Noh theater, or *Wishy Wishy 7*, a fighting game parodying anime characters).

### The Cutting Room Floor

In games as in animation, Japan is more permissive than the U.S., and conversions are often tamed down. Large companies have their own censorship rules, whether forbidding the word "Die" or turning blood into white "sweat." Only the success of hits such as *Mortal Kombat* has changed this in recent years, to the extent that even Nintendo's Nintendo will release an Ultra 64 version of *Killer Instinct*. In America a "Mature" (17 years or older) rating lowers sales, so to fit a more kids-friendly rating





## In Japan, Christianity is not treated with automatic reverence, and is sometimes used in jokes and puns

such things as nudity, shower scenes, and flipping off the camera are cut. Double standards remain, the Sega CD game *Snatcher*, a Cyberpunk story which received a "Mature" rating, treated its sugar-coated ciphers but had its alcohol and tobacco toned down.

One area of surprising touchiness is religious references. In Japan, Christianity is not treated with automatic reverence, and is sometimes used in jokes and puns. In many game conversions crimes are changed to Egyptian tribes. Probably no game has as much homonymy as *Devil Summoner*, a Saturn occult RPG where the final boss is, depending on your character's behavior, either the Devil or God.

### The Road to Code

After a game is selected, the U.S. company assigns him a developer's copy, as well as supplementary information on disk and paper. What happens then depends on the company's staff and size.

Smaller companies may publish up the games to home, but send the actual programming and translation to contractors or companies in Japan. Everyone pitches in. *Man Aboard* at Working Designs does continuity work, text editing, and even voice acting for games such as the *Demolition* series. At *Alpha Software* (Virtual *Hydral*, *Devil Summoner*) Product Specialist Brian Glasbrook helps select games and does the editing. Larger companies, such as Square Soft, have specialized teams of 10-20 people, with separate programmers for graphics, battle scenes, and field work. The more people a company has, the more it can customize and control the pro-

duction. Translation is the most obvious part of conversion. After testing and evaluating the games, the converters come up with a dictionary of names for objects and characters in the game, and try to find appropriate translations (direct translations are often confusing). Changing *kaup* (Japanese and Chinese characters) to *English* is a time-consuming process, involving changes in the very memory map. *English* is a less complex language, and fills 150% of the space of *kaup*, so that text (particularly in RPGs) must often be dramatically abbreviated. Most RPGs have at least 500-600 pages of text.

"The audience tends to be well-educated readers," says Ted Woolley, Marketing Director for Square Soft. Woolley personally translated games such as *Secret of Mana* and *Final Fantasy* ("Japanese games are more verbal in general than we are").

Gameplay is often changed as well. Japanese RPGs are often relatively easy, so in conversions the opponents are made more powerful and the rate of experience gain slowed. Continuity also has to be maintained, for all their drama, some Japanese RPGs have fairly disconnected plots.

### Westward Ho!

After as many as several months of conversion, the game is ready. Some games are ubiquitous hits, not even recognized by younger players in Japanese. Some are players' first introductions to anime- and manga-style art.

Others fail to break the cultural barrier, or the attention for the U.S. audience fades. The first *Ranma 1/2* fighting game for Super Famicom became the unrecognizable *Street Combat* for the S-NES, losing its distinctive characters and the whole point of the game. But ideally the conversion process provides additional time to perfect and debug the game, and make it appealing to a wider audience.

"Personally, I think the quality goes down," says Brian Glasbrook of *Alpha Software*. "The mood and feel of Japanese are lost."

"But," he adds, "I think if you're going to release a quality product anywhere, it'll be received well." 95



Video comic *Snatcher* was originally released in Japan in 1988 and finally appeared for the American Sega CD in 1994. Fans so love the plot it's been revived in Japan for the PlayStation - moving from 8 bit to 32 bit with only minor changes.



The first **Ranma 1/2** fighting game for Super Famicom became the unrecognizable **Street Combat** for the S-NES



There's not much difference in the *Marriage* just date each girl enough times and you're on the brink of proposal.

gramming, as well as the translation. Companies which do in-house programming use a full development system, or full workstations, for the hardware in question.



The jiji *My Neighbor Totoro* character (left) takes on another jiji character in *Waku Waku 7* on arcade game.

# MANGA

## F E A T U R E S

### SUPER STREET FIGHTER II: CAMMY



*The story is fun...*

Possibly the only 15-year-old who could match wits with James Bond and win, MI-6 (British Intelligence) spots Cammy as a well-bred in espionage as an athlete. Other agents sometimes look down on her for her age and gender, but Cammy has the respect of her commanding officer. More important to her is the great gap in her past, for Cammy is an amnesiac, trained by the Special Forces for three years but unable to remember anything of her early life.

Most recently she rescued top-secret blueprints for a high-tech weapon from a traitor at MI-6. Byrd, a muscular powerhouse eager to sell out to the highest bidder, took from that victory, Cammy is rushed off to a lonely island in the Mediterranean—Bedlam—to investigate a new mystery on unfamiliar ground...



**Name:** Guile  
**Identity:** American Green Beret  
**Notes:** A participant in the Battle Hove tournament, he too has a secret reason for being on Bedlam.



**Name:** Colonel Wolfman  
**Identity:** Leader of the Special Operations Unit  
**Notes:** Will Cammy live up to the expectations of her new superior officer?

### SAMURAI SHODOWN



*The story is fun...*

The year is 1780, the place is Japan. Arriving from the distant mountains of her home, the young warrior woman Nakoruru is surprised for the greed and strife of the feudal world. Her travels take a strange turn when she meets, finds, and challenges the deadly swordsman Hashmaru. Nakoruru's skill with knife and trained eagle surprise Hashmaru's defenses, and she becomes one of the only people able to draw his blood—or earn his respect.

Their fight is interrupted, however, by an apparition of a dark spirit whose evil has blighted the land. Hashmaru and Nakoruru break free, but are nearly ambushed by gun-bearing robbers. Only the throwing knives of a hooded stranger save them.

Now as they continue their journey, forces will mean evil are mobilized by their enemies to stop them.



**Name:** Nagi  
**Identity:** Ninja Assassin  
**Notes:** To avenge her father, she has sworn to kill Hashmaru!



**Name:** Unknown  
**Identity:** Mysterious traveler  
**Notes:** As much a fighter as a monk, he has already saved Hashmaru and Nakoruru's life.

SUPER STREET  
FIGHTER II

# CAMMY



Battleland — a small island in the Mediterranean



This place used  
to be a little-known  
resort area.

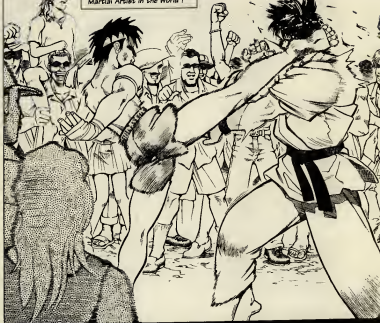
But its name traveled  
around the world after the  
annual Battle Rave started  
three years ago.



Battle Rave is...

For the purposes of publication in English, the network in this publication is in reverse  
from the original Japanese version.

...a street fighting tournament  
using the whole island as  
an arena, in which people fight  
to earn the title "Greatest  
Martial Artist in the World"



## FIGHT TWO BATTLE RAVE PART ONE

Story & Art by **MASAHIKO NAKAHIRA**

English Adaptation by **JAMES D. HUDNALL & LILLIAN OLSEN**

Lettering & Touch-up by **MARY KELLEHER**

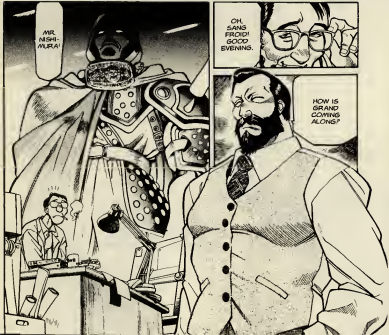




MR.  
NISHI-  
MURA!

OH,  
SANG  
FRID! GOOD  
EVENING.

HOW IS  
GRAND  
COMING  
ALONG?







MAJOR  
GUILLE  
US  
AIR  
FORCE

THAT  
HAIRSTYLE  
ISN'T  
EXACTLY  
CUT OUT  
FOR UNDER  
COVER  
WORK



DON'T  
SAY THAT  
IN FRONT  
OF HIM



YOU'LL BE  
OPERATING  
UNDER HIS  
COMMAND  
ON THIS  
MISSION

THE  
SON IS  
READY  
PLEASE  
HURRY

BLUBB





YOUR MISSION  
IS TO  
INVESTIGATE  
THE ACTIVITY OF  
THE BATTLELAND'S  
CRIMINAL  
ORGANIZATION  
AND THEN  
REPORT  
IT TO MI-6.



AND  
ANOTHER  
THING



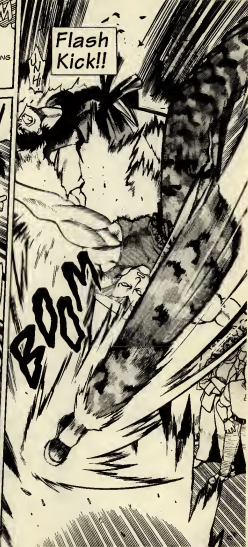
DON'T DO  
OR SAY  
ANYTHING  
THAT WOULD  
TARNISH  
THE  
REPUTATION  
OF THE  
SPECIAL  
OPERATIONS  
SECTION  
OF MI-6.



THAT  
DEPENDS  
ON  
MAJOR  
GULE...







# RO OARR

DID YOU SEE THAT?!

AN EASY VICTORY!

HIS RIBS ARE PROBABLY BROKEN. DON'T MOVE HIM UNTIL HELP ARRIVES.

MAJOR GULE! WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

DON'T YOU KNOW? THE **BATTLE RAGE** IS GOING ON RIGHT NOW!

## FAPP

THE CONTEST TO EARN THE TITLE OF THE GREATEST MARTIAL ARTIST IN THE WORLD... AND THE PRIZE MONEY...

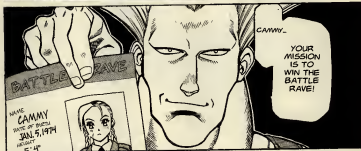
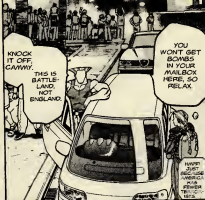
### BATTLE RAGE

THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT!

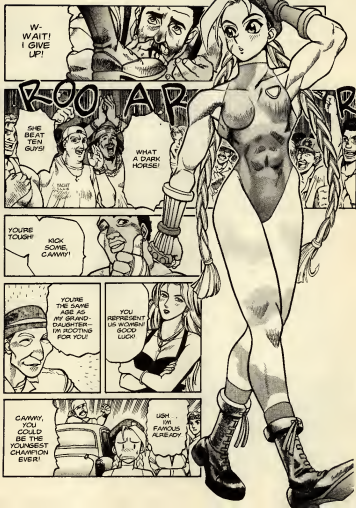
MAJOR GULE,

THE MOST BASIC UNDERCOVER PROCEDURES STRESS POSING AS A CIVILIAN AND NOT DRAWING ATTENTION TO YOURSELF!

I WAS TAUGHT AT THE S.O.S. THAT THE MINUTE YOUR COVER IS BLOWN, YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD!







THAT WAS  
BABY!



W-WAIT!  
I GIVE  
UP!



SHE  
BEAT  
TEN  
GUYS!

WHAT  
A DARK  
HORSE!



YOU'RE  
TOUGH!

KICK  
SOME,  
CANNY!



YOU'RE  
THE SAME  
AGE AS  
MY GRAND-  
DAUGHTER—  
I'M ROOTING  
FOR YOU!

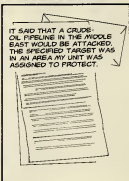
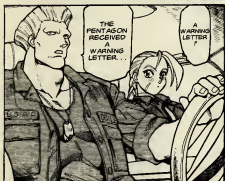
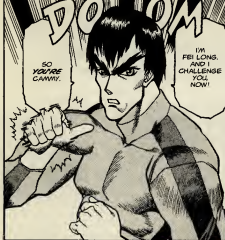


YOU  
REPRESENT  
US WOMEN!  
GOOD  
LUCK!

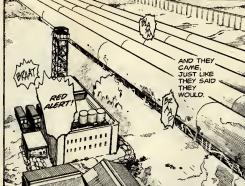


CANNY,  
YOU  
COULD  
BE THE  
YOUNGEST  
CHAMPION  
EVER!

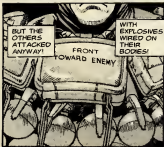
USH...  
I'M  
FAMOUS  
ALREADY!







AND THEY  
CAME,  
JUST LIKE  
THEY SAID  
THEY WOULD.



# PRUMBLE

THEY  
FINISHED  
THEIR JOB--  
AND THERE  
WASNT  
ANYTHING I  
COULD DO  
TO STOP  
THEM!

I'LL NEVER  
FORGET  
THEIR EYES.

THEY WERE EYES  
THAT ACCEPTED  
DEATH AS AN  
INEVITABILITY...

...AND  
THEY WERE  
LOOKING  
FORWARD  
TO IT!

THATS  
A TAD  
BIASED,  
MAJOR  
GULE.

EMOTIONS  
TWIST  
FACTS  
QUITE A  
LOT.

YOU'RE  
PRETTY  
COLD.

WHAT  
DOES THAT  
HAVE  
TO DO  
WITH THE  
BATTLE  
RAVE?

FIVE  
PEOPLE HAVE  
DISAPPEARED  
AFTER  
PARTICIPATING  
IN THE BATTLE  
RAVE OF THE  
PAST THREE  
YEARS.

THE  
TERROR-  
ISTS  
INCLUDED  
FOUR OF  
THEM

THEY  
WERE ALL  
VETERANS  
WHO WERE  
CANDIDATES  
FOR THE  
CHAMPION-  
SHIP

AKRTCH



LWL...  
MAJOR GULE...

I WAS  
INSENSITIVE  
WHEN  
I SAID YOU  
WERE  
BIASED.

LWL

NOW...  
BACK TO  
BUSINESS.

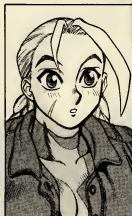
THIS  
WAY.

DON'T  
WORRY,  
IT'S MY  
FAULT FOR  
TALKING  
TOO  
MUCH.

SO YOU'RE  
NOT JUST  
A GOLD-  
HEARTED  
FIGHTING  
MACHINE.

THAT  
MANSION  
BELONGS  
TO SANG  
FROID,  
BATTLE  
RAVE'S  
SPONSOR.

HE'S PASSING  
HIMSELF OFF AS A  
MYSTERIOUS MULTI-  
MILLIONAIRE, BUT  
WE HAVE REASON  
TO BELIEVE HE'S  
INVOLVED IN  
THESE INCIDENTS



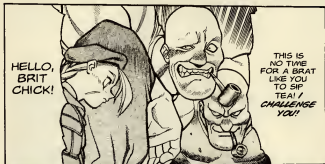
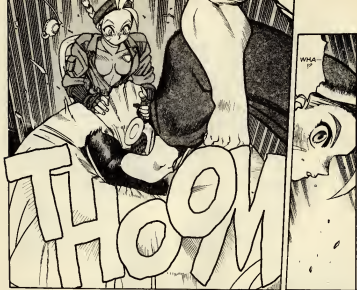


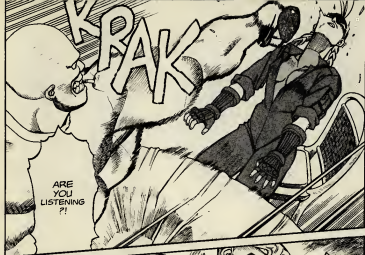
I FEEL LIKE  
I'VE BEEN  
THERE  
ONCE  
BEFORE.  
LONG  
AGO...

DÉJÀ VU?  
NO,  
NOTHING  
SO  
OCULT.

IT  
WAS MORE  
REAL...

NOT TO  
MENTION  
UNBEARABLY  
SAD  
AND EVEN  
AGONIZING...





ARE  
YOU  
LISTENING  
P!



SHE'S  
AS WEAK  
AS A  
KITTEN!

HAR,  
SHE TOOK  
ONE LOOK  
AT THE MAD  
MADROSS  
BROTHERS  
AND WAS  
TOO  
SCARED  
TO MOVE!



I HAVE  
TO GET  
AHEAD OF  
MYSELF..



THIS IS NOT  
A SITUATION  
WHERE  
I CAN  
AFFORD  
TO GET  
LOST IN MY  
THOUGHTS.

I SHOULD  
BE THINKING  
ABOUT  
MAJOR  
GULE...  
ABOUT MY  
MISSION!





HOLD  
IT!

CAMMY,  
YOU'RE  
IN THE  
S.O.S.!!

THAT ONE  
WAS FOR  
YOUR  
HANDICAP!



I DON'T  
WANT TO  
WASTE MY  
TIME. I'LL  
TAKE BOTH  
OF YOU ON  
AT ONCE!

THAT  
PUNCH  
DIDN'T  
FAZE  
HER!?

UH--

I WENT  
EASY ON  
HER.  
DON'T  
WORRY!



OF  
COURSE,  
I CAN TAKE  
CARE OF A  
WHOLE UNIT  
OF MEN  
LIKE YOU,  
NO  
PROBLEM!

TOOOT!!

FT



DAWN.



COME TO  
THINK OF IT,  
OUR ROLES  
SHOULD HAVE  
BEEN  
REVERSED.

SHE'S ONE  
OF THE  
BEST IN THE  
WORLD AT  
THIS SORT  
OF THING



IT'S A  
GOOD THING  
THE SECURITY  
IS SO LAX HERE  
IN THE  
MEDITERRANEAN.

On  
THP



REALLY,  
DR.  
NISHI-  
MURA?

OF  
COURSE, AT  
THAT AGE  
FEATURES  
CAN  
CHANGE IN  
THREE  
YEARS.

I  
CAN'T  
BE  
POSITIVE

THEN  
DON'T  
BOTHER  
ME, YOU  
GUACK!

WHAT'S  
GOING  
ON?



THERE  
SHOULD  
BE A  
COMPETITOR  
NAMED  
GAMMY  
PARTICI-  
PATING IN  
THE BATTLE  
RANG



MONITOR  
FIFTEEN,  
SIR

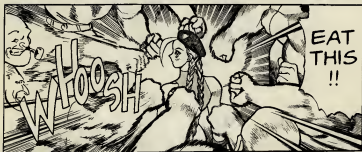


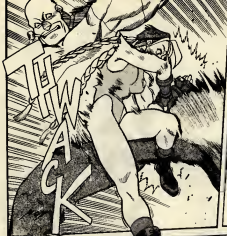
HA  
HA  
HA  
HA!!

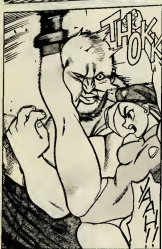


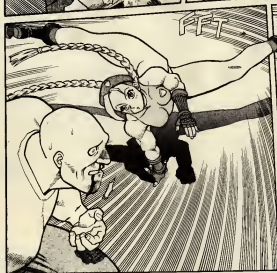
HOW'S  
THIS  
FOR  
SPEED!?

BET  
YOU  
CAN'T  
SEE  
ME!



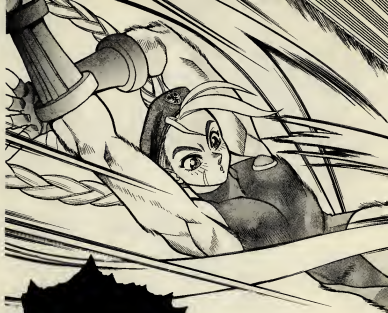






THAT  
MOVE

...



**SPIRAL  
ARROW!**







TO BE CONTINUED

FAST, FURIOUS AND FINALLY IN A BOX SET!

# FATAL FURY

## THE BOX SET

*Special three-tape set of fast and furious martial arts fighting by Japanese action director Masami Obari!*

• MEET TERRY BOGARD, HIS SILVER-HAIRED BROTHER ANDY, THAI KICK-BOXER JOE HIGASHI AND THEIR QUEST FOR VENGEANCE AGAINST THE AWESOME GEESE HOWARD IN **FATAL FURY: LEGEND OF THE HUNGRY WOLF!** • MEET THE UNBEATABLE WARLORD WOLFGANG KRAUSER AND BOUNCY NINJA GIRL MAI SHIRANUI IN **FATAL FURY 2: THE NEW BATTLE!** • MEET LAOCORN GAUDEAMUS, A BRASH YOUNG MAN WITH THE POWERS OF A GOD IN **FATAL FURY: THE MOTION PICTURE!**

To Order Videos or Other Merchandise, Send  
Checks & Money Orders to:  
VIZ SHOP BY MAIL • P.O. BOX 77010 • SAN  
FRANCISCO, CA 94107  
Or Phone (Orders Only!): **NEW TOLL FREE  
NUMBER!** (800) 394-3042  
Ask for Our **FREE** Catalog!

JAPANESE ANIMATION... IN ENGLISH!

 **VIZ VIDEO**

**COMING THIS OCTOBER**



Not rated. Parents strongly suggest

# SAMURAI SHODOWN

The seventh year of Tenmei  
(1787). . .

## BATTLE TWO: WAR CLOUDS

IN  
EDG...

Story by KYOICHI NANATSUKI

Art by YUKI MIYOSHI

English Adaptation by FRED BURKE & KADRU HOSAKA

Lettering & Touch-up by MARY KELLEHER

© 1993

WE'VE  
COME  
SO FAR,  
MAMA-  
HAMA.





LET'S  
DESTROY  
THE EVIL OF  
THE DARK  
KINGDOM  
QUICKLY SO  
WE CAN  
RETURN TO  
KAYU-  
KOTAN...



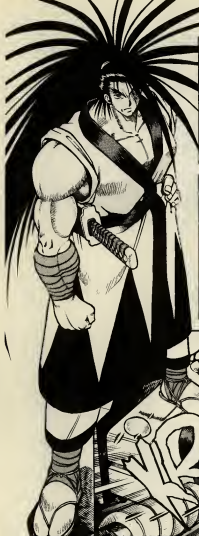
HMM...  
THAT  
HAIR!



THAT  
MUST  
BE  
HACHIMARU.



SHAWA  
SHAWA



IT IS I  
NAGIRI  
OF THE  
KOGA  
NINJA  
SCHOOL!

LONG  
TIME  
NO SEE  
HACH-  
MARU!

SH  
S  
S  
H  
S  
T

S  
A  
A

STOP  
NAGIRI!



THE  
BLACK-  
WINGED  
ENCIRCLE-  
MENT!

I HAVE  
COME  
TO  
AVENGE  
MY  
FATHER!

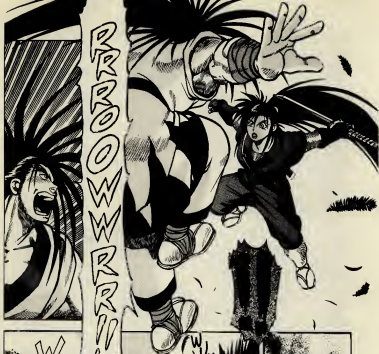


UNGH!











GO AHEAD  
— KILL ME, HACHIMARU!  
KILL ME, OR  
YOU'LL  
REGRET  
IT.



I DID NOT  
KILL YOUR  
FATHER.  
MURUYOHKEN  
KOGA  
WAS MY  
FRIEND...



SHUT  
UP! HOW  
DARE  
YOU SAY  
THAT!





KA-  
KANG





WAIT!  
LISTEN  
TO ME,  
NAGIRI!



FSH



SHE'S  
GONE?



NAKO-  
RURI...  
WHY DID  
YOU  
FOLLOW  
ME?



I *SAVE*  
YOU, AND  
*THIS*  
IS THE  
*THANKS*  
I GET?!

*YOU*  
WERE THE  
ONE WHO  
LEFT  
WITHOUT  
LEAVING  
ANY  
MESSAGE!



OH,  
SORRY...



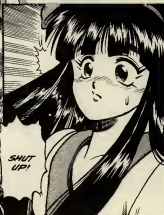
SO  
THAT'S  
THE  
GRAVE...



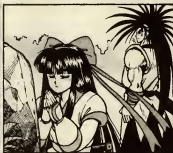
YES...  
AN OLD  
FRIEND -  
A NINJA  
NAMED  
MURYOOKEN  
KOGA.



SO,  
LIKE...  
WAS HE  
THAT  
WOMAN'S  
FATHER...



SHUT  
UP!











SPONTANEOUS  
COMBUSTION!  
THIS MAN  
MUST BE A  
NINJA.



BOOSH

CAWWWW



THERE'S  
A POSSE...  
IT SEEMS  
LIKE WE'VE  
GOTTEN  
INTO THE  
MIDDLE  
OF A BIG  
MESS.



ARE  
THEY  
STILL  
AFTER  
US?



FOUR  
FIVE... NO  
THERE ARE  
MORE!  
THEY'RE  
KEEPING A  
CONSISTENT  
DISTANCE  
FROM US.



THEIR  
SCENT  
DIS-  
APPEARED.

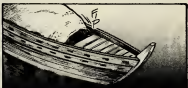
DAWN

THEY  
CAN'T  
BE FAR  
AWAY.



IT'LL  
BE NIGHT  
SOON  
LET'S GET  
MORE OF  
US

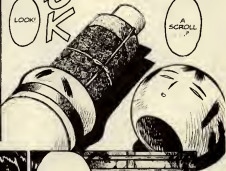
YESSIR





LOOK!  
To K

A  
SCROLL



GOSH,  
THIS IS  
INCRED-  
IBLE...

WHAT  
IS IT?



Pff



!

FWOOM



STAY  
...





WOULD  
YOU HAND  
THAT TO  
ME,  
MACHWARU?

BOOM



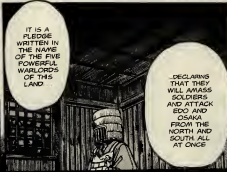
YOU  
WE'VE  
MET  
BEFORE...



... AND I  
TAKE IT  
YOU KNOW  
WHAT THIS  
*SCROLL*  
IS ALL  
ABOUT.



YES.



IT IS A  
PLEDGE  
WRITTEN IN  
THE NAME  
OF THE FIVE  
POWERFUL  
WARLORDS  
OF THIS  
LAND

...DECLARING  
THAT THEY  
WILL AMASS  
SOLDIERS  
AND ATTACK  
EDO AND  
OSAKA  
FROM THE  
NORTH AND  
SOUTH, ALL  
AT ONCE



WHAT  
DOES  
IT  
MEAN?



IT MEANS  
THAT  
*SOMEONE*  
WANTS TO  
REVIVE THE  
*CIVIL*  
WAR!



THAT'S  
YOUR  
GAME!  
YOU'RE A  
SHOGUNATE  
SPY!

WE HAVE  
BEEN  
COMMANDED  
BY THE  
ELDERS IN  
THE  
GOVERNMENT  
TO  
PREVENT  
THIS  
CONSPIRACY—

HOW  
CAN  
WE  
TRUST  
YOU?



YOU  
HAVE  
NO  
CHOICE.



... FOR  
I AM  
HAMED  
MATTORI  
OF THE  
IGA  
NINJA  
SCHOOL



EVER SINCE  
THE FAMINE  
OF TENMEI,  
CONDITIONS  
HAVE BEEN  
DESPERATE.  
EVERY LAND  
SUFFERS,  
BUT IF WAR-  
LORDS  
FROM THE  
PROVINCES  
DECLARE  
WAR...


THE  
WORST  
SUFFERING  
WILL BE  
THAT OF  
THE  
COMMON  
PEOPLE



THE ODOR  
OF ROTTING  
CORPSES  
WILL  
FILL THE  
STREETS,  
AND THE  
CRY OF  
ORPHANED  
INFANTS  
WILL ECHO  
IN THE AIR!



IF WAR  
WERE TO  
BREAK OUT  
NOW, THIS  
STATE  
WOULD  
DEFINITELY  
DESTROY  
ITSELF!



*For a shogun ninja (a  
government spy), the act of  
exposing one's countenance  
means putting one's life on the  
line. However, Manzo deliberately  
exposed his face to Hachmaru.  
There is no act more dangerous  
than this-- and thus no proof  
more convincing.*



HACHMARU  
HE'S NOT  
LYING  
TO US  
I CAN  
SEE IT.



SHUP

YEAH.





LOOKS  
LIKE  
WE'RE  
SURROUNDED  
...



WHAT  
...



THE DOGS  
OF THE  
MASTER-  
MIND ARE  
HERE TO  
RETRIEVE  
THIS  
WRITTEN  
PLEDGE



KILL  
THEM  
ALL!

The  
scroll -  
snatch  
it!



KILL  
THEM!



THEY'RE  
COMING  
SUCH  
BLOOD-  
THIRSTY  
SPIRITS



# Perfect Combination!

PERFECT COLLECTIONS...  
PERFECT COLLECTABLES...  
PERFECT PRICE!

**FREE**  
Limited Edition  
Collectable Phone Card  
With Each Video!



Cat. #91163, 104 Mins., Not Rated □

Series Value!

**\$19.98**  
each\*

(MSRP with Phone Card)

**LIMITED  
OFFER!  
DON'T  
DELAY!**



Cat. #91353, 104 Mins., Not Rated □

Score big-time with this incredible offer! These collections contain 4 complete episodes on each cassette. That's half-priced compared to buying every episode separately! PLUS, each collection comes with a FREE Collectable Phone Card! They're only available for a LIMITED TIME—so don't just see...FLY to snatch up these unbelievable values!

*Dragonair*  
Produced



**IN STORES MAY 28!**

**ORION**  
HOME VIDEO

\*Suggested MSRP. © 1994 Orion Home Video. All Rights Reserved.

## IN A ROOM OF ITS OWN



## Resident Evil

System: Sony PlayStation  
Developer: Capcom  
Publisher: Capcom  
Availability: Now (U.S.)

**R**esident Evil is a third-person action/puzzle game similar to *Alone in the Dark*, with 3D polygon characters in a stunningly realistic environment. *Resident Evil* is in a class of its own when it comes to video game gore: monsters that can take your head clean off, and blood, blood, blood.

You may choose one of two characters, Jill Valentine or Chris Redfield. The story and difficulty of the game is different for the two. Jill can hold more items than Chris, and can also pick some locks and get into places easier. There are quite a few weapons to be found (shotgun, magnesium pistol, bazooka...), and tons of bodies to kill (bombers, mad dogs, giant spiders...). The save feature is also unlike most games: First you must find ink ribbons for a typewriter, then you find out where the typewriters are, and then you can save.

*Resident Evil* is easily the best game I have played in a long time; the graphics are constantly changing views give it the feel and look of a movie. The different music for different events is cool: somber eerie music for the usual part of the game and deluxe terror music when you deal with some bigger than life monster. The detail is what hooks you: the sound of a zombie dragging one foot; the sound

of insects when you go outside, or the ability to interact with almost everything around you. The game play is pretty good, although some times you try to run and get a clean shot off and the view changes so that you can't see what you're trying to shoot at. The end is so cool I won't run it for you, but when you think you've beaten the game, then when you've beaten the game they give you a "special" reason to do it again!

Ryan MacDonald



## NOT A BOMB



## X-Men: Children of the Atom

System: Sega Saturn  
Developer: Capcom  
Publisher: Capcom (Japan); Acclaim (U.S.)  
Availability: Now

I know some of you are thinking, "Oh great, just what I need: Yet another crappy *SAT* clone." And yes, *X-Men* is just another clone, but it has a lot going for it.



First, it's got a very identifiable and diverse cast (what person hasn't at least heard about the X-Men?). There are ten selectable characters (seven if you count the hidden character Akuma... how'd he get there?), ranging from everyone's favorite Wolverine to quick and rather cheap Psylocke, to the ominous Sentinel. Each character has her own special ability (double jumping, bouncing off walls, etc.) plus a super attack that can hit an opponent sometimes 15+ times! The character animation itself is close to arcade perfect. As far as sound, the music is tolerable—kind of *Mega Man*-ish—and the slashes, crashes, and whist sound appropriate.

Probably the game's biggest nuisance is "super jumping," which allows you to leap two full screen heights into the air, making it possible to do more

combos, hit even more times, and inflict even more damage. Another major (though not groundbreaking) addition is the Mutant Power Meter that fills up as you fight.

Now for all of you gamers who complain about games being too easy: don't worry. *X-Men* is the most difficult 2D fighter I've ever played. Maybe it was just me, but as I progressed through the game, it appeared that my opponents got increasingly cheap and annoying, and I won't even begin to talk about Magneto (who makes M. Bison look like Diddy Kong).

When compared to the likes of *Street Fighter Alpha*, *X-Men*'s flaws are more visible (the loading time is a bit longer than other games, and some of the voices could've sounded better). If you're a total *X-Men* fan, I'm sure you'll get this no matter what—and I don't blame you because it's a ton of fun—but if you want a solid game, you might want to save your money for *Alpha*.

Ed Nis



**The Last Word:** As far as 2D fighters go, *X-Men* is high up on the list, but not a number one. If you're looking to be really challenged, this game won't disappoint you.

## MECHA ENFORCERS



### Horned Owl

**System:** Sony PlayStation  
**Developer:** Konami  
**Publisher:** Sony Computer Entertainment  
**Availability:** Now (Japan), September/October (U.S.)

Sony has done it again! **Horned Owl** is a definitely worth close scrutiny for both gun game fans and Masamune Shirov fans alike.

**Horned Owl** is a shooting game based on the work of Masamune Shirov (*Applesauce*) in which you must destroy enemy mechs and battle suits. **Horned Owl** has a vague resemblance to *Lethal Enforcers* with a twist. The game moves along the X, Y, and Z axis, as opposed to just the X. It is an arena-based game, but the gameplay is the same, just point and shoot.

The graphics are very well done, particularly in the immersion sequence. During gameplay, however, the graphics suffer a little, as objects become vague and the many colors that were used seem to blend into each other.

If you're looking for death incarnate get shot at before you can even start shooting you. I didn't find it. I did find that a lot of things blow up if you shoot them. The game is not boring. It will keep you on your toes, it just won't shoot them off.

The game itself is unique as it comes with its own light gun. The gun, however, was designed with someone else's hands in mind. The start button, located on the side of the gun, was impossible to reach unless you moved your whole head around the grip. The grenade launcher button,



located on the back, suffered from a similar problem. If it were about an inch higher, it would have been fine.

Another personal drawback was not knowing enough Japanese, but this is only limited to the story as the game instructions and verbal commands (such as a reminder to reload your gun) are all in English.

This is a game for those looking for a little more depth than your average shooting game, but you'd better have nimble fingers.

### Dead Moll



**The Last Word:** *Horned Owl* didn't "wow" me completely, but I was impressed with its crisp animation, Masamune Shirov storyline and gun. Although the gun design and the language barrier provide minor drawbacks, not knowing Japanese does not make the game any less fun.

## SONGS OF PHANTASIA



### Tales of Phantasia

**System:** Super Famicom/ Super Nintendo  
**Developer:** Namco  
**Publisher:** Namco  
**Availability:** Now (Japan), unknown (U.S.)

It may seem odd to see Namco (makers of *Tekken 2*) go into the RPG market, but they do a great job with *Tales of Phantasia*. This 48 Meg pert features over 50 hours of game play, and unlike Square's *Chrono Trigger*, you don't have to play it more than once! But like *Chrono Trigger* (which featured character designs by Akira Toriyama of *Dragonball* fame), *ToP* features a popular Japanese manga artist. The character designer is Kiyosuke Fujishima, the artist and writer for the series *Obi! My Goddess* and *You're Under Arrest*!



Several key elements make the cart stand out. One is the spectacular graphics. Everything is nicely detailed and shaded, very impressive for the SNES/SFC platform. It rivals the PSX/Saturn RPGs. Another feature is that *ToP* offers fully digitized voices. That's right—during battle sequences your characters will shout out spells ("Fira! Aola!") and weapon attacks ("Myn Ken!") in fact, when you start the game, you are greeted with an opening song! (Well, the first half of it at least; for the full version you'd have to buy the CD soundtrack.) The song is "Yume



wo owa ni" ("Never-ending Dream") sung by Konomi Yaseide.

The battle system is unique. Namco calls it the LMB (Linear Motion Battle) System. The best way to describe it is that it's similar to *Secret of Mana*'s battle system, but in a sideways 2D view. Most of the time you will only control the sword-wielding hero (unless he's a loliid), otherwise the computer AI controls your companions. You can choose to set your companions to specific attributes, such as "always cast spells," "attack aggressively," or other options that suit your playing style.

In closing, *Tales of Phantasia* promises to deliver. This is one of the best RPG imports out this year that I have played. The plot keeps you wondering what will happen next. Although they could have lessened the frequent appearances of random encounters (continuous random encounters bore me), it's still pretty addictive.

Philip L. Ye

**The Last Word:** Diehard RPGers will love this game. Let's hope Namco ports this game over to the States so everyone can enjoy the fantastic *Tales of Phantasia*.

# Three ROM Blondes

Welcome back to the arena, fighting fans! In switching from 2D to the (literally) deeper field of 3D fighting games, we couldn't pass up a chance to pay tribute to their female characters, characters often overlooked (or stared at vacantly) by male gamers. And what better way to pay tribute to them than by having them hack away at one another? Thus we present Nina Williams (*Tekken*), Sarah Bryant (*Virtua Fighter*) and Sofia (*Battle Arena Toshinden*). Let's duck for cover as our commentators argue over who would win, and why all three (characters, not commentators) are either brainwashed, drugged, or amnesiacs!



## Professor Jeffrey Nevins

Just as literature, television and cinema have their character types, so too does the medium of video games. Fighting games in particular have spawned characters with well-defined personalities, histories and morals. In this brief study, we'll focus on black leather-wearing, blond-pompadour, female assassin characters in 3D fighting games.

First comes Sarah (*Virtua Fighter*, leather gloves), a college student who was captured by the faceless corporate entity behind the Virtua Tournament, brainwashed, and sent to kill her brother Jacky Bryant. Nina (*Tekken*, player 2—leather boots) is a British assassin who joined the Tekken tournament to eliminate Heihachi, head of the criminal group running the contest. Finally, Sofia (*Toshinden*, leather bodysuit) is a Russian spy/adventurer with no memory of her past, who is trying to find clues to her origin.

Women with mysterious pasts, raging against the system, with names ending with the "ick" (i.e., ick) sound (I would've included Cammy as well, but this study is restricted to 3-D fighters). I believe these three would fight each other in order to determine who is "The Real McCoy." After all, people who are

similar in appearance and personality can often end up resenting each other (possibly because they feel their uniqueness is being threatened).

But how do these fighters compare in battle? Well, Sofia is the best distance fighter with a projectile and a long-reaching whip. Also, only she can roll out of the way—into the third dimension! Let's say Sarah is the best middle-distance fighter (punch/kick range), because Nina is the best in close, with multi-part limb-breakers.



## THE WINNER:

My personal favorite is Nina (funky voice, nice outfit as Player 1, and lots of grab moves). However, I'd have to side with Sofia, due to that projectile snake whip (including that multi-hit special attack) and ability to roll into the third dimension (though I'm sure the others would if they could).





**Rev. Roger Müller**  
Nina, Sara or Sofia? I have to pick Sarah Bryant as the best of the three, but not because I don't like the others. No, I'm over *Tekken* spent as many hours researching whipping techniques as the AM2 team did on martial arts... about

Sarah wins awards for coming out first. She's a true original: until *Max Headroom* becomes a polygon fighter, she'll be the oldest popular character of her type. Plus, unlike her colleague Pa, she's actually good.

Sofia is clearly the prima donna of her game. Some gamers have complained about her shoulder size, but it's about time games had some muscular women (not to mention *freedom fighters*). Her outfit has also been criticized, but think of other famous women's fighting gear. At least Sofia doesn't have *post-porn* on her head! On the other hand, Nina is slightly outplayed by Michelle Chang, the more user-friendly, manga-like character (undoubtedly the movement has led to her anti-social, kiki-coring tendencies).

Why would they fight? Copyright must! Clothes are coveted as the least important! Ultimately, who needs a reason? All it takes is for their sixth sense to say "Alas, I sense your fighting game character" and they'll go at it, leaving the bystanders in whatever location they're at to wonder "Who are these people and why are they causing all this property damage?"

#### THE WINNER

Sarah Bryant! Yes, her Joe Kame Do is the most realistic technique. Nina is a clown, down to the purple clothes. Sofia could probably score a few hits early in the combat, but once Sarah closed in, it'd be all over. Landy, for sheer volume of fan material published, Sarah Bryant is #1.

**Doctor Alexandre Toth**  
I must disagree with my honorable colleague. To begin with, Sofia wears goggles, not leather! The resident lack of protection is more than made up by the distraction factor. How would they meet? Simple. The plot of *Tekken* involves a criminal tournament with

cash awards for the winner. Sofia being a private investigator, she is just as likely to investigate one evil underground death match as another. Meanwhile, Sarah

Bryant is seeking the money to undo the frontal lobotomy performed on her at the hands of the Syndicate, as well as a better ending, some than the congratulatory text in *Virtual Fighter*: "I was born for cinema sequences," she thinks. Little does she realize that her appearance, Nina Williams, was the very reason whose bomb attack ended her brother Jacky Bryant's nice card-playing career! The audience average appreciation would probably end with all three fighting at once.

Of course, I am primarily concerned with the psychological motives of these scrapping examples of polygon courts, and therefore have placed only a \$5,000 bet on the outcome.

#### THE WINNER

Nina. Having a "Guard" button works to Sarah's advantage, but in defiance of gravity, she still jumps too slowly. That may be fine where she comes from, but next to two fast-moving opponents she is likely to go out in the first round. This leaves Sofia and Nina. However, Sofia is clearly used to fighting male opponents. When Sofia's superior dominance play fails, Nina will rush in and use an oldie neck-snapping technique. Of course, if words can't even draw blood from her in her native game, Sofia will be okay sure for a few bruises, but the fight is still over. I predict that after the battle Nina will probably decline a guest appearance in *King of Fighters '96* and go on to become an enemy in some game more suited to her personality (one with guns).

#### THE REFEREE

Wow... it looks pretty close! Nina was mentioned a lot, though, and Sofia attracted the written equivalent of lots of fanboy stings. Dr. Toth tells me these papers will be collected for a graduate thesis, *Polygon Court in 1996: an essay Japanese Literature*, clearly a landmark publication for video game scholars. In the meantime, Professor Nerve is encouraged to come back to the Game On! USA playtest rooms to retrieve the leather articles he left there. See you next month! ☺



PLAYER SELECT	
PROFILE	
Name	Sarah Bryant
Country	USA
Birthdate	July 4, 1973
Sex	Female
Job	College Student
Hand type	Left
Hobby	Big sister!

Al, Sarah, how well you have fished out

# SARAH BRYANT

Import and American

# Nintendo 64 Playstation and Saturn.

Now you can buy at the lowest unbeatable prices. Think of it!

**Saving \$10, \$20 or more** on each and every game you buy.

## Universe Video Games

Light Years Ahead Of The Competition With Down To Earth Prices

### PlayStation



PlayStation Series Games  
with computer or any 48  
bitable. Play any PS game on  
any PS system.  
Total No. 1  
Mean is VFX  
Showdown 3  
Advanced VG

Tekken 2  
Soulblazer 5  
Wolverine 2  
King of Fighters 95

007 Legends  
Motorhead 2  
Naruto Vol. 2  
Shogun Warriors

### SEGA SATURN

Ultimate MK3  
Mighty  
Alfred Odyssey

007 Legends  
Swordbrim  
Story of Thor

Dark Sinner  
Fatal Fury 3  
Lunar

## ★ Guaranteed ★

Lowest Unbeatable Prices In The Universe  
On All Import Games, Systems And Accessories

### 24 HOUR VIDEO GAME HOTLINE

Call now for the hottest titles  
919-872-2440

Mastercard, VISA and CDO accepted

Instant cash for select systems and games.

Nintendo 64, Playstation, Saturn, PC CD ROM,  
NEO-Geo CD, Jaguar, SFC, Animation, MO, Game Music,  
Wallscrolls, Toys, PC Engine

Overnight delivery. Call today. Play tomorrow  
Monday-Saturday 10:00 am-7:00 pm E.S.T.

919-872-2440 FAX 919-872-6701

Dealer and Wholesale Inquiries Welcome.

Head East of Internet!

# j-pop.com

ONLINE MAGAZINE OF  
JAPANESE POP CULTURE  
BY VIZ COMMUNICATIONS

The Web foothold of Japanese pop culture has arrived! **j-pop.com** is the most detailed site yet to cover the growing popularity of Japanese comics, animation, games and trends. **Links, news and imports** are all here; we update each section monthly or sooner to provide access to Japanese **anime, manga, video games**, and online or phone **shopping** for current **import products**. Music, art, videos, memorabilia... **MANGA VIZION, ANIMERICA ONLINE, GAME ONLINE! USA**... see for yourself, head East of Internet and let your guide be **j-pop.com!**

<http://www.j-pop.com>



All rights reserved for all parties mentioned. We reserve the right to refuse any sale, trade or purchase. Games are subject to availability.



**Your #1 Source of American and Japanese Video Games**

# JAPAN VIDEO GAMES

## ULTRA 64

### IMPORT



Call for price

Guides Eye 007  
Road Doctor  
Rody Harvest  
Buggy Boppe  
Kitty Hawk 64  
Pilot Wings 64

Star Fox  
Star Wars  
Super Mario Kart R  
Turk Demouser Hunter  
Waver Rider

## SONY PLAYSTATION



### (Import)

Advance V.O.  
Beyond The Beyond  
Burning Fast  
Choro Q  
DeadHeat Road  
Double Dragon  
Dragon Ball Z Legend  
Dynasty War  
Floating Runner  
Galeforce 3  
Galaxy Fight  
Genao Sultodon  
Gormeen Warrior  
Guardian 9 2  
Iron Arcade Classic  
Jumping Flash 2  
King Zan  
Motor Toon GP 2  
Puzzle Bobble 2  
Ridge Racer Revolution  
Rockman X  
Saber Ikon Super 3  
Switcher  
T-Market  
Tetra X  
Tetris in Memory

### (US)

Dark Star  
Devils Skies  
Earthworm Jim 2  
Project of Ren  
Myd  
Ramen Legend  
Return to Zero  
Shaman Memories  
Satan N Jamb  
Space Hulk  
The Hunt  
Tokyo Hay Battle  
Tomlinson 2  
Triple Play 67  
Virtual Open Tennis  
Williams Arcade Classic

### IMPORT SPECIAL:

Namco Museum 2 \$80  
Gradius Deluxe PK \$85  
Pia Pro Wrestling \$60  
Dark Seed \$80  
Dragon Ball Z \$60  
Final Match Tennis \$99

Call for any games not listed above

## SUPER FAMICOM

Dragon Ball Z Hyper  
Dragon Quest 6  
F-1 Spirit 4  
Gundam G-Strike  
Gundam W  
Kirby's Super Deluxe  
Mario RPG  
Romancing Saga 3  
3 Pin Pro Wrestling

Savior Moon RPG  
Savior Moon Super 3  
Secret Of Illusion 3  
Super Gaiden 4  
Tales of Phantasia  
Tengai Makyo Zero  
Touhou Hunter G  
Treasures of Raiders  
Zero

### SPECIAL OF THE MONTH:

Dragon Ball Z #3 \$59 Gun Hazard \$79  
Piercing 1.2 G 98 \$50 Bahamut Legend \$59

## SEGA SATURN



### Import

3X3 Dials  
Advent Conspiracy 2  
Dark Legend 2  
Dark Savior  
Dragon Ball Z  
Dragon Force  
Fists Fury 3  
Fists Revenge  
Fist of the N. Star  
Golden Axe  
Gothic 2  
Guardian Heroes  
Gulfiver Boy  
Gun Goryon  
Gundam  
Kaleo Daki  
King of Fighters 95  
Lakia Power Story  
Rockman X 3  
Savior Moon Super 3  
Sawtooth  
Sonic Wing Special  
Story of Two  
Tetra  
World Advance 2

and  
many  
more

### (US)

Saku  
Saku Baku  
Sakurabian Gentry  
Oregon's Lair 2  
Gith Ax The Duel  
Quadrant Heroes  
Iron Arcade Classic  
Iron Storm  
Legacy of Kain  
NBA Action  
NHL Powerplay 95  
Pander Dragon 2  
Shining Warriors  
Skeleton Warriors  
Satan N Jamb  
Space Hulk  
Ultimate MK 3  
Wipe Out

### IMPORT SPECIAL:

0 Bushes \$99  
Gradius Deluxe PK \$99  
Gothic \$94  
Niruku \$94  
F-1 Live Infront \$99  
Slam Dunk \$59

## PC ENGINE

Dragon Ball Z  
Gothic Fantasy 4  
Pia Pro Wrestling  
Savior Moon Super 3  
Sawtooth  
Sonic Wing Special  
Story of Two  
Tetra  
World Advance 2

Saku  
Kakaku  
Legend of Xerxes 2  
Gulfiver Boy  
Lough 2  
Piercing 1.2 (R)  
Sawtooth X  
Dragon Knight & Grief

### SPECIAL

L.Ds \$20  
Drop Off \$10  
Pia Pro ADD \$40  
Art of Fighting ADD \$45  
Piercing 1.2 GCD \$49  
Kakaku ADD \$40  
Pia Pro ADD \$40  
Pia Pro ADD \$40

### \$24 SPECIAL SALES

Settle Sports  
Wipe Force  
Burning Soldiers  
Immergency  
Killing Time  
Star Blade

### \$15 SPECIAL SALES

Cowboy Casino  
Gundam  
Out of This World  
Shadow  
Soccer Kids  
Real Prebel

Satan N Jamb  
Super Street Fighter 2  
Need For Speed  
Casper  
Dragon's Lair 2  
Lost Eden  
Captain Quasar  
Myd  
Return Fire 2  
Space Ace  
Piercing 1.2  
Ultimate (Japan)  
Yu Yu Hakusho (Japan)  
Savior Moon (Japan)

## MEGADRIVE

Alan Soider  
Savior Moon

Rockman World  
Dragon Ball Z

## DEALERS AND WHOLESALE WELCOME

CALL (818) 281-9282  
FAX (818) 456-6845

eMail: japanvideo@aol.com

## GAME STAR

C.O.D. & Credit Card OK Send \$1.00 for delivery of your catalog.

Complete Line of Super Nintendo, Genesis, Game Gear, and Virtua Boy. Check with us before you call anyone else!

For Mail Order or Wholesale CALL (818) 281-9282 or FAX (818) 456-6845 710-1 W. Las Tunas San Gabriel, California 91770

*roughly 2 and a half steps beyond...*

## alt.ant

website—<http://www.bask.org/edu/answ.html>

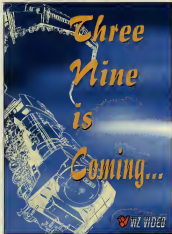


atlant@Tiscali.it - a good source for online & things  
a division of the MIT Media Lab  
at the campus of The University of California, Irvine.

important video games and edutainment coloring, VHS, DVD, manga, 1 story, picture book, trading cards, books, and related merchandise.

new import shipments arriving weekly  
special orders welcome—no extra charges  
on any business week orders!

Three  
Nine  
is  
Coming...



## IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

### Feature Presentation

**SNK: THE ART OF GAMING**  
Is it an art or a skill to design  
games? *Fatal Fury*, *King of  
Fighters*, *Samurai Shodown*

You've played them at the arcade, and now Sony, Sega and the new Neo-Geo CD are giving SNK a new audience on home consoles. **Ninja Masters**. **Shin Ou Ken**.

What is the battle plan of the **other** 2D fighting game company in the 32-bit wars? From cartridges to manga and anime, we'll interview the Japanese R&D of SNK's dozens of games, and look at their history and future!



Yamato Era Japan is about to become the Era of Darkness... **SAMURAI SHADOWS** With the help of their new ally Haruo, Roshomaru and Nakoruru face Gen-Ao and his devil... until the disciple of the Dark Kingdom reveals his identity.



All This

...And Much, Much More!



Bigger reviews and longer articles make **Game On! USA #3** an issue for game players to look out for. First learn the scoop on SNK, the company whose fighting games cross most easily between America and Japan, and then read an exclusive interview with Namco's **R&D** in Japan whose **Tekken 3** is crossing sooner than you think. Meet *Two Kings of Fighting* in issue #2!



### 32-bit Mangle

She's 18, she's buff, and she's in Her Majesty's Secret Service!  
**SUPER STREET FIGHTER II: CAMMY**  
Can Guile fight his brown-haired friend? Can Cammy confront the truth of her origin? Open-up Battle Royale comes to an exciting conclusion!



Now Available in Canada!

Pioneer Presents

# "JapanimACTION!"

Wah, wah, wah. It's BATTLES EVERYWHERE, ON EARTH, IN SPACE AND IN OTHER DIMENSIONS.

## Tenchi Muyo! Ryo-Ohki

Episode 12: "Zero Ryoko", Episode 13: "Here Comes Juna"

(S E R I E S C L I M A X)

This is it! The 2nd series climax! Tenchi, Ayaka and Washu join Mihoshi in an all-out battle against Dr. Clay and Zero for the life of Ryoko. Even after the defeat of Clay though, Tenchi's new family must face perhaps its greatest threat...Dad!

A 2-DISC SET  
WITH A NARRATED  
RECAP, SKETCH STILLS  
AND DOCUMENTARY INTER-  
VIEWS WITH ENGLISH AND  
JAPANESE VOICE ACTORS  
IN A GATEFOLD JACKET  
AT AN INCREDIBLE  
PRICE!



**EL-HAZARD:**  
THE MYSTERIOUS WORLD  
The Fourth and Fifth Movies



**THE HAKKENDEN**  
Volume 4: episode 7 & "Hakkenden Discs"



**ARMITAGE III**  
THE GRAND FINALE!

COMING IN  
FEBRUARY!

All titles available on Laserdisc and VHS in dubbed and subtitled versions. Interested? Want to know more? Send us your name and address to receive your free issue of our Anime Newsletter. You'll be up to date on the up-to-the-minute happenings on the Anime scene. Send your name and address to:

PIONEER ENTERTAINMENT (USA) L.P. • ANIME-11 • P.O. BOX 22782 • LONG BEACH, CA 90801



**PIONEER**  
The Art of Entertainment

# The Best Anime-tion!

APPLESEED • MACROSS PLUS • NEW DOMINION TANK POLICE • NINJA SCROLL •  
PATLABOR 1 & 2 • ORGUS 02 • ANGEL COP • DEVILMAN • THE WINGS OF HONNEAMISE •  
BLACK MAGIC M66 • GIANT ROBO • MACROSS II THE MOVIE



Coming in 1996!

MACROSS PLUS VOL. 4 • THE GUYVER • BOUNTY DOG • MAD BULL  
• DANGAIOH • VIOLENCE JACK • JUNK BOY • GUNBUSTER

AND...



E-Mail us at [manga@manga.com](mailto:manga@manga.com) or visit our WWW site: <http://www.manga.com/manga>

© 1996 MANGA Entertainment Inc. An Island International Company.